

Creating Competencies for Your Workforce Planning Process

If your organization has established competencies for its staffing positions, the Workforce Planning Team can proceed to projecting future competency needs, and to the Gap Analysis. If competencies do not exist, you can generate some working competencies following the steps below in the section, “What to Do If You Don’t Have Competencies.”

What are Competencies?

Competencies are characteristics that contribute to successful job performance. They may be characterized as:

- Knowledge
- Skills
- Abilities
- Attributes/qualities
- Other characteristics

How Do Competencies Apply to Workforce Planning?

- Identifying competencies for the positions your organization currently has, and will need in the future, is a powerful analysis tool for filling current gaps, and projecting future needs.
- Competencies create the strategic link between your organization’s vision/mission and goals, and your employees’ job duties and performance goals.
- When employees’ performance goals can be directly tied to the overall goals of the organization, improvements in performance, cooperation, and morale are likely.

If your organization does not currently have competencies associated with its positions, this is an opportune time to develop some basic ones. It is a best practice to involve employees in the creation of competencies.

What to Do If You Don’t Have Competencies

1. Review your organization’s mission/vision and goals.
2. Review the Vermont Statewide Core Competencies at:
http://humanresources.vermont.gov/sites/dhr/files/pdf/training_development/DHR-SOV_Core_Competencies.pdf.
3. Review each employee’s job description with them, select several of the highest priority duties they perform, and create a competency for each. Use the Vermont Statewide Core Competencies as a model of how to write a competency. If you need assistance in this process, contact workforceplanning@state.vt.us.
4. Invite each employee to complete the [Competency Self-Assessment](http://humanresources.vermont.gov/sites/dhr/files/pdf/training_development/DHR-Competency_Self-Assessment.pdf) at http://humanresources.vermont.gov/sites/dhr/files/pdf/training_development/DHR-Competency_Self-Assessment.pdf provided in the Competencies section of the Workforce Planning Toolkit website.
5. Compare the employee’s completed Competency Self-Assessment with the job description and competencies created in step 3 above, and make adjustments as needed.

Types of Competencies

Behavioral Competencies

- Focus on the individual; contribute to individual success in the position one holds
- Are observable and measurable

- Relate to the core purpose and values of an organization
- May apply to most of the positions in the organization, or may be specific to a type of job, a level, or a single position
- Examples:
 - Teamwork & cooperation
 - Communication
 - Customer Service
 - Initiative
 - Results-oriented
 - Leadership
 - Talent management
 - Lead by example

Technical Competencies

- Are job-specific, and focus on the job
- May apply to a category of positions
- Involve knowledge and skills needed to perform one's job effectively
- Examples:
 - accounting principles
 - human resource law
 - structural engineering principles

Statewide Core Competencies

These are designed to provide a base across most positions in state government. Generally, they:

- Are behavioral
- Apply to the individual employee, rather than being job-specific

Leadership Competencies

These may:

- Be behavioral or technical
- Apply either to a specific job (Commissioner, Program Director, etc.), or to an individual person

Characteristics of Competencies

- Technical competencies are often included in the job description, as they describe what a person needs for the job.
- Behavioral competencies are generally NOT included in job descriptions. Many of the Vermont Statewide Core Competencies are behavioral in nature.
- Competencies should have at least one measureable behavior or outcome associated with them. Examples:
 - Mission: Can articulate the mission and vision of the organization
 - Ethics: Can list policy and practice standards
 - Self-management: Creates a work plan
 - Team work: Keeps team informed of work
 - Customer Service: Recognize the uniqueness of each customer and vary interaction appropriately to provide effective and respectful service.